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ABSTRACT

This document reports on a symposium on pre-school to school transition that was co-sponsored by the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE) and 13 other organizations and that brought together over 100 educators, human service providers, policymakers and business people to share their experiences in working to strengthen the transitions and linkages between pre-kindergarten and early elementary school. Programs featured in this symposium fell into four categories: (1) district-level programs; (2) school-based models; (3) comprehensive preschool models; and (4) parent involvement and education programs. The proceedings included three featured presentations on the topics of the changing demographics of the Southeast, the challenges and benefits of interagency collaboration, and the importance of seeking political support for improved practice. Appendices include the symposium agenda, a list of symposium sponsors, a list of promising programs and contacts, suggested readings on transition, and a list of conference participants. Order forms for SERVE products and services are provided. (MM)

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Spotlight on SUCCESS

Early Childhood Symposium Proceedings
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SERVE
SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education

Spotlight on Success:

Early Childhood Symposium Proceedings, 1992

By
Linda Chion-Kenney

SERVE
SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education

Affiliated with the
Florida Department of Education
and the
School of Education
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INTRODUCTION

The Second Annual Early Childhood Symposium on Preschool-to-School Transition was held on October 1 and 2, 1992, in Atlanta, Georgia. The symposium brought together over 100 educators, human service providers, policymakers, and business people to share their experiences in working to strengthen the transitions and linkages between pre-kindergarten and early elementary school. Participants also discussed ways to promote interagency collaboration, the process by which human service providers work together to integrate their services—including education, health care, and family counseling—to meet the comprehensive needs of young children and their families. In addition, the symposium served as a "spotlight on success" during which successful transition programs were showcased so that other professionals could learn about what was working and how to adopt and adapt innovative activities for their own communities. (See Appendix A for the symposium agenda.)

The symposium was co-sponsored by SERVE and thirteen other organizations dedicated to improving the education and welfare of young children (see Appendix B for list of sponsors). SERVE—The SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education—is a coalition of educators, business leaders, governors, and policymakers who seek comprehensive and lasting improvement in education in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Funded by the U. S. Department of Education, SERVE provides leadership, support, and research to help state and local efforts to improve educational outcomes, especially for at-risk and rural students. SERVEing Young Children, a major initiative of the SERVE Laboratory, was responsible for planning the symposium. A three-year project funded by the U. S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, SERVEing Young Children focuses on the first of the National Education Goals—"By the year 2000, all children will enter school ready to learn"—and emphasizes transition and collaboration issues.

Nancy Livesay, Project Coordinator for SERVEing Young Children, notes that the project endorses the understanding of transitions described by Sharon Lynn Kagan of Yale University, whose work appeared in readings given to this year's symposium attendees. Kagan (1991) distinguishes between two kinds of transitions: 1) **vertical transitions** that bridge gaps between major time periods in a child's life (i.e., transitions from familial to non-familial care, home to pre-school, and pre-school to school); and 2) **horizontal transitions** that bridge gaps that occur within the same time frame in a child's experience (i.e., gaps between health, mental health, and social service agencies or gaps among various service providers who may serve children during the same week or month).

Based on findings from the first symposium, a list of essential elements for effective transition programs was compiled. Through the SERVE Sharing Success program, SERVEing Young Children then identified and recognized good transition programs in the Southeast. Forms were sent throughout the region asking for nominations of programs that met the identified essential elements. Nineteen promising transition programs were selected by a review panel and site visits documented reported accomplishments. This year's symposium brought together the directors of those programs to discuss their work and spotlight their

success at an awards banquet. The programs were also highlighted in the SERVE publication, *Sharing Success in the Southeast: Promising Programs in Preschool-to-School Transition.*

The programs featured at this symposium (see Appendix C for contact information) fall into four broad categories: district-level programs, school-based models, comprehensive preschool models, and parent involvement/education programs. In addition to sharing successful practices, participants explored the responsibilities of role-alike groups, compared and combined efforts within each state, and discussed critical issues in improving transitions. At the end of the symposium, participants were asked to "adopt" a program to use in their communities. In year three of the project, SERVE will provide information and technical assistance to help participants and presenters work together to implement aspects of these transition programs.

The symposium included three feature presentations on critical issues facing those committed to meeting the needs of young children: the changing demographics of the Southeast, the challenges and benefits of interagency collaboration, and the importance of seeking political support for improved practice. Lastly, symposium participants learned more about the mission and activities of SERVEing Young Children and were promised support and assistance from the SERVE Laboratory in their continuing efforts to improve transitions for young children.

The ultimate purpose of this symposium was to energize participants to return to their communities with new ideas and the desire to continue to seek change in the way children and families are educated and served. Such energy is critical when facing today's challenges. As symposium presenter Jack Levine put it: "We don't have a day, we don't have a dollar, and we don't have a person to waste."

SECTION ONE: SPOTLIGHT ON THE NEEDS

Professionals in the Southeast who work with young children "are probably more aware than any other group of educators that the demographics are changing, and they're changing dramatically," said Dorothy Routh, Deputy Director of the SERVE Laboratory, in the symposium's first presentation. Based on a demographic study conducted for SERVE by noted demographer Harold R. Hodgkinson, Routh's talk revealed the extensive need in the Southeast for collaboration among professionals. The new South, she said, is characterized by tremendous growth, high poverty, increasing diversity, and fundamental changes in family structures. SERVE has published the results of Hodgkinson's study in a book entitled *Southern Crossroads: A Demographic Look at the Southeast.* See p. 33 for details.

Growth

Citing figures from Hodgkinson and from the 1990 Census, Routh stated that "the best word to describe growth in Florida is 'pathological.' We have to think about educating 100,000 new children every year in the state." While the U. S. population grew 9.8 percent from 1980 to 1990, the increase in Florida was 32.7 percent. Other southeast states also grew at rapid rates, including Georgia at 18.6 percent, North Carolina at 12.7 percent, and South Carolina at 11.7 percent. However, Mississippi (2.1 percent) and Alabama (3.8 percent) were among the lowest growth states.

Poverty

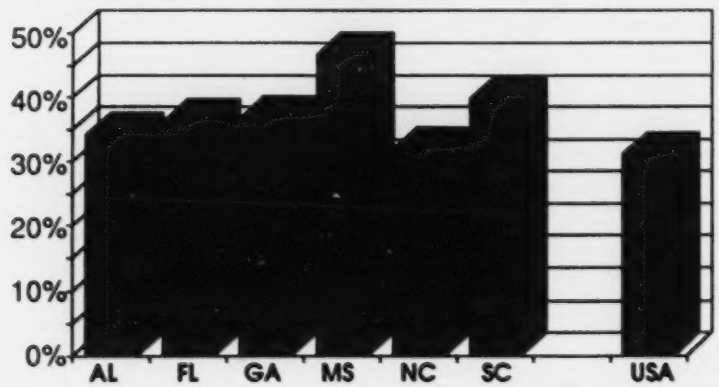
Hodgkinson found that one in five children (19.5 percent) lives in poverty in the U. S., and all but one southeast state (North Carolina, 18 percent) have even worse poverty rates. The poorest state in the Southeast is Mississippi with 34.4 percent of its children living in poverty. Alabama follows with 29.4 percent, Georgia has 23 percent, South Carolina has 22.4 percent, and Florida has 19.9 percent.

Diversity

Every southeast state has a greater percentage of minority students than the national rate of 31.1 percent (see Table 1). By the year 2010,

Every state in the Southeast has a greater percentage of minority students than the national average.

Table 1
Minority Youth as a Percentage of All Youth, 1990



Source: *Kids Count Data Book*, 1992.

over half of the students in Florida and Mississippi will come from minority groups. To illustrate the increasing diversity and some of its resulting challenges, Routh pointed out that the equivalent of a new classroom of children from Nicaragua arrives in Dade County, Florida, every day. "Not only do they not speak English," said Routh, "many of them have never been in school before."

Changing Families

High rates of single parents, working women, and teenage mothers indicate that families in the Southeast are changing. According to Hodgkinson, the region has a higher percentage of children living in single-parent families than does the nation as a whole. In 1991, the national rate was 24.1 percent (up from 21.3 percent in 1984). By comparison, the percentage of households in 1991 that contained a single parent was 32.6 in Alabama, 30.8 in Mississippi, 29.7 in Georgia, 28.8 in Florida, 26.3 in South Carolina, and 25.2 in North Carolina.

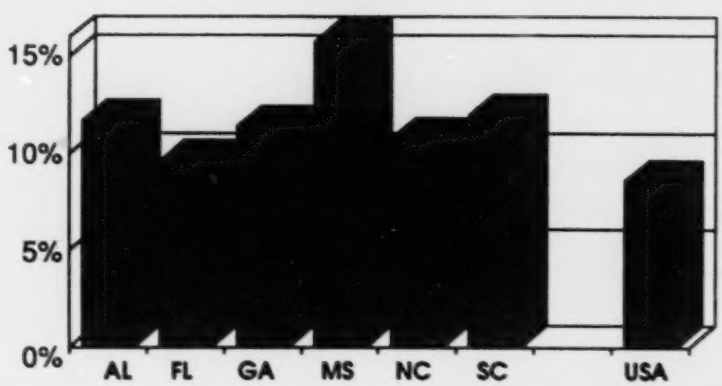
The southern belle is a myth—55 percent of women in the Southeast are in the labor force.

Routh noted that "One of the biggest indicators that the South is changing is the number of women in the workforce. The southern belle is a myth." Nationwide, the percentage of women in the labor force was 57.5 in 1990, which is a bit below the rates in North Carolina (60.1 percent), Georgia (59.4 percent), and South Carolina (58.7 percent). In Florida, the rate was 55.2 percent, followed by Mississippi with 53.9 percent, and Alabama with 51.2 percent. All the states in the Southeast have higher rates of births to teenage mothers than the national rate of 8.6 percent of all births (see Table 2).

These demographics about families, Routh observed, require us to ask the question "Who's raising the kids?" When we combine this information with rates of child poverty and increasing diversity, the need "to integrate social services and education at a very early age is an absolute necessity.

Table 2

Percent of Births to Teen Mothers, 1989



Source: *Kids Count Data Book*, 1992.

Children are coming to school with very different needs. For children, the school is the family. For many, it is a refuge." When professionals like those at the symposium draw upon these demographics—using what Routh called "good ammunition"—they can make a convincing case to other decision makers that the Southeast must focus on changes that address the needs of children and families. Collaboration, with its potential to use resources more efficiently and effectively, is especially important in the Southeast where finances are not abundant and funding allocations do not always make children a priority.

Personal Income

For example, Routh presented figures showing that all the southeast states had a per-capita personal income in 1990 below the national average of $18,685. Florida was close with $18,586, but that figure includes the substantial incomes of wealthy retirees. Georgia's per capita personal income was $16,944, North Carolina's was $16,203, South Carolina's was $15,099, Alabama's was $14,826, and Mississippi's was $12,735.

Support to Education

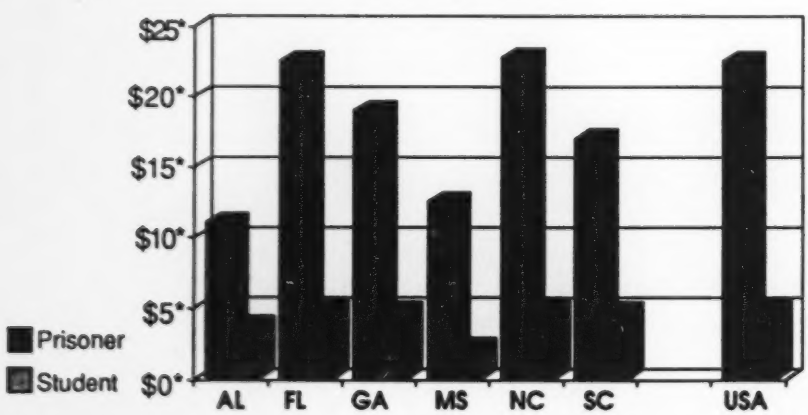
Routh showed that southeast states fare well in comparison to the nation in funding to support education. By dividing per pupil expenditure by per capita income, we find that all but one southeast state in 1990 was above the national average of 24.8 percent. The highest support was in North Carolina (29.7 percent), followed by South Carolina (27.7 percent), Georgia and Florida (26.4 percent each), Mississippi (25 percent), and Alabama (23.5 percent).

On the average, states in the Southeast spend four times as much on prisons as on education.

Prisons: The Biggest Drain

However, like the nation as a whole, states in this region spend much more of their yearly budget on prisoners than on students (see Table 3).

Table 3
Average Annual Cost per Prisoner (91-92) vs. Student (91-92)



* in thousands

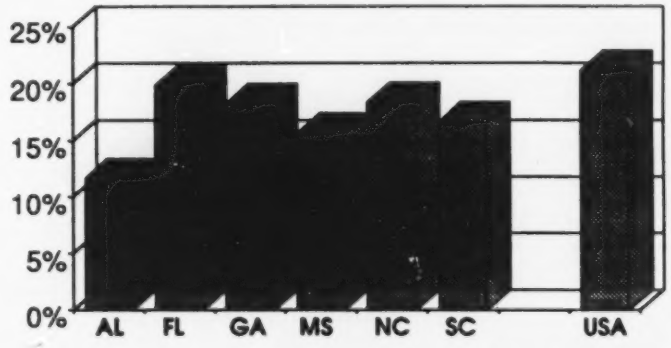
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991.

"When you look at what we spend on our schools to educate our children—the preventive side—compared to what we are spending one year for a prisoner," Routh said, "then you really have to ask the question, 'What kind of investment policy is this?' It makes no sense whatsoever. We're spending more on a prisoner than our per capita personal income. It's just unbelievable. These are the kind of things we have to get before our appropriations committees and our legislatures, and we have to show it in this way."

"When we talk about the future of the South, and the economic development we dream of, we talk about a high-tech, clean-industry future," Routh said. "But we're going to have to invest more in education. We cannot compete with the labor force we have now." In three states—Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina—30 percent of the population over age 25 lacks a high school degree, and only one southeast state (Florida with 77.9 percent) has a high school graduation rate greater than the national average of 76.9 percent. No southeast state's college graduation rate meets the national average of 21.2 percent (see Table 4).

Table 4

Percent of Population Over Age 25 Who Have Completed College



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991.

"The South," Routh said, "has many things going for it: the beaches, the weather, and generally a pretty good infrastructure. We have a lot of new buildings and roads compared to other parts of the country. [But] when we try to seek new business and new development in the Southeast, it's very difficult . . . without a better-educated populace. This is the one variable, the one indicator, that's killing us."

Routh concluded by emphasizing that interagency collaboration is necessary, not only for moral reasons, but for economic prosperity as well. To discuss the needs in dollar terms when children are in the balance may seem somewhat cold, but Routh declared that tying early childhood development to economic development is the best tactic for communicating the needs to those who develop policies and allocate funds. Said Routh, "We've got to do it for the survival of our own region."

SECTION TWO: SPOTLIGHT ON THE CALL

The two other feature presentations at the symposium called on participants to respond to the needs of children and families by collaborating and taking political action for change.

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

The call for interagency collaboration was made by Martin J. Blank, a senior research associate at the Institute for Educational Leadership, in the symposium's second presentation. Following up on Dorothy Routh's talk, Blank challenged the participants: "How many of you can snap off that data, so that when you go to talk to a leader in the business community or school board, you know the facts about children and families in your community?" He emphasized that putting data to good use paves the way for collaboration, but integrated services are not possible until key players are brought together to share such data with one another. "The reason you need collaboration is because you need somewhere to take the data. If you have a group of people at the state and local level who are primed to look for this data as a source of information about what's broken in the system, then you can push forward the policy changes [that are needed]. You can't just be out there saying, 'it's good for kids and families.' Yes, you're right, but that's not enough. You have to be specific. Policymakers need hard information and you need hard information if you're going to get to an outcomes-based system."

What is needed is a "pro-family system of services" which is school-linked, information-driven, and outcomes-based.

"It's my contention that most of the services we create today we create for agencies, programs, and disciplines," said Blank. "That's what drives them, not the needs of the families." Categorical funding at the federal level is mirrored in agencies at the state level and results in separate boxes of services at the local level, but this structure has to change. What is needed is a "pro-family system of services," which, among other things, needs to be school-linked (although not necessarily school-based); information-driven (based on information shared between teachers and other service providers); and outcomes-based. "We've got to talk in our communities about outcomes, not about numbers of services and agencies or programs." Collaboration, Blank said, "means nothing unless the outcomes get better, unless we see fewer people going to jail and more kids graduating, until we can see fewer young people going into institutional care and more young people staying in their own families, [and] until we see fewer low-weight babies."

Blank's presentation was based on the work of a study panel made up of members of the federal Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. The results of their activities included an under-

standing of the necessary components of successful collaborations. These include, among other things, community infrastructure, a network of support, creative financing, school-linked service provision, and community-driven practices.

Community Infrastructure

How strong is a community's public safety, housing, employment, transportation, and municipal services? The community's infrastructure "makes possible the success of many of the things we're trying to do," Blank said. For example, "the head of the county social services department in San Diego said the biggest barrier to families being able to be successful is transportation."

Speaker Martin Blank suggests rebuilding "kinship networks" within the community where neighbors can give and receive support.

Network of Support

Successful collaborative efforts try to help communities build a network of support—through relationships and services—which will improve the chances for meaningful change in families' lives. "Most families and children need three levels of support and empowerment," Blank said: caring relationships, helping institutions, and crisis intervention. All people need families, friends, and co-workers with whom to develop caring relationships that can be helpful in times of need, but, for many people, such relationships do not exist today. Blank suggests rebuilding "kinship networks" within the community where neighbors can give and receive support. People in caring relationships need to be connected to helping institutions such as the school, the health clinic, and the early childhood development center, or the church, YMCA, or community center. "All too often," Blank pointed out, "the conversation about collaboration is between and among public agencies or publicly-funded agencies, and leaves out some of the [private, not-for-profit] and neighborhood-based organizations that give young people the affiliation and support that they need as they grow older."

Creative Financing

With today's troubled economy, an efficiency agenda is essential. Those involved in educating and helping young children and their families recognize that more money is needed. These providers also recognize that finances are scarce and that it makes sense to join forces and link resources. "How many of you have connections to Medicaid and try to use it in Head Start or early childhood education programs?" Blank asked. We need to look at how child-care block grant money, preschool education money, Head Start money, and other funding streams "all fit together into something that looks like a system." Greater flexibility in Chapter 1 funding, for example, means that a computer lab installed for disadvantaged children can also be used for adult education at night.

School-Linked Service Provision

Being school-linked does not necessarily mean being school-based. The effort needs to be "at the place where people associate and affiliate," Blank said. The best location for service provision could be a Head Start center, housing project, or neighborhood center, but collaborative activities "have to be connected to the school. The school's got to be a player. The school's funding streams are stronger," Blank said, and "teachers see young children more than any other helping professional."

Community-Driven Practices

"The exciting thing about collaborations today," Blank said, "is that they are driven by what communities want, not by what the state asks them to do or tells them to do." Of course, the state must be involved because it offers much of the funding and makes many of the policies that affect service delivery. However, Blank emphasized that the state should not "drive what you do, because ultimately you need more than the public resources to make the changes. You need the United Way resources, you need the volunteer resources, you need the entire community's resources coming together to support kids and their families."

The exciting thing about collaborations today is that they are driven by what communities want, not by what the state asks them to do or tells them to do.

Collaboration to integrate services is not an easy task; turf-guarding, jargon, and disagreement about processes and goals can get in the way of working together. To help with this process, Blank included in his presentation a summary of the study panel's five-stage collaborative process: getting together, building trust and ownership, developing a strategic plan, taking action, and going to scale.

Getting Together

People from the state, city, neighborhood, family, and the private sector need to come together to talk about what children and families need and how their needs are being met. It is imperative to "bring to the table" the parents and kids who receive the services. Many services themselves are lacking in quality, and when collaborators are forced to have "tough conversations" about change, other participants in the discussion can help focus on the improvements that are necessary.

Building Trust and Ownership

Collaborators need to get to know one another, learn about each other's professional concerns and responsibilities, and develop a sense of shared ownership of the collaborative effort. "One of the struggles in collaboration is to find new language," Blank said. Agency jargon can divide people; collaborators will need to agree on new words and definitions in order to facilitate communication and promote cohesiveness. For example, Blank revealed, "I try to avoid saying 'at different

levels.' Level implies hierarchy, and hierarchy implies power. What we're really trying to do here is share power and share leadership." Instead of "level," Blank uses the word "domain."

Collaborators must also learn about the participating service-providing systems. For instance, early childhood educators need to know that the Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis Testing (EPSDT) program is a Medicaid service for youth from birth to age 21 that not only recognizes a problem, but also treats it. "The children in your Head Start program deserve that service," Blank said, "and you can find a way to connect up to it and get it paid for through the health department by becoming a certified Medicaid provider." Knowing what services are available and how they work helps collaborators discover ways of working together.

Developing a Strategic Plan

Collaborators will have to develop a strategic plan that involves building a prototype of a new neighborhood delivery system. "The complexities of implementation are very real here," Blank said. People will have to be trained in different ways and learn how to share information about the needs and accomplishments of the children and families they serve. "You can't take the same family practices that you traditionally exercised," because today these practices often are not respectful of some families or culturally sensitive. Also, not all agencies or professionals want to adopt new practices, such as good transition programs; everyone will have to "build a common philosophy" consistent with collaborative ideals and improved outcomes.

Taking Action

With the right staff and an effective outreach strategy, it is time to take "on your own system," Blank said, "but as a collaborative. You've looked at what's going on out there, and you know it doesn't work for kids. The vision you have, I hope, is: 'We have to make this work for families.'"

Going to Scale

Successful interagency collaboration in one domain should lead to "doing more prototypes, finding new ways to finance these prototypes, [and] developing more and more leaders who understand what [collaborators are] trying to accomplish." Going to scale, Blank added, is about "creating appropriate transition experiences in every school where the children need it." The collaboration agenda "is not just about doing it once or twice. It's about system change . . . this is a long-term agenda."

Blank concluded by emphasizing that linking resources in "a pro-family system of services" is "not only about piecing together different kinds of public programs. It's about getting communities reconnected with the needs of all the children and families who live there." And it's about improving outcomes so that the child who finishes Head Start will also finish high school and not wind up in prison.

POLITICAL ACTION

In the last feature presentation of the symposium, Jack Levine, executive director of the Florida Center for Children and Youth, called on participants to collaborate to "build political muscle" on behalf of children and families. Working for policy change is crucial, Levine said, because, "the status of families, especially the status of young families, has declined in this decade and, more generally, this generation." Over 3,000 babies are born each day in the Southeast; compared to those born ten years ago, babies born today are worse off on almost every single health indicator—that in itself is enough to demonstrate that the ways we serve children need to be changed radically. "Everything we do," Levine emphasized, "every meeting we conduct, every proposal we write, every program we try to plan and implement and evaluate, needs to [focus on] strengthening the ability of young families to care for their kids."

Over 3,000 babies are born each day in the Southeast; compared to those born ten years ago, babies born today are worse off on almost every single health indicator.

In these times of great need and financial distress, Levine reminded symposium participants that whatever they do or plan to do must "reflect great use, superior use, of resources." However, they should also seek more resources by convincing policymakers that "investing in children and families is the best way to go for our communities and nation." He noted that this election year gives us a great opportunity to make children a political priority by talking with new state policymakers who are looking to be educated about the needs in their states.

Politics, he added, "is our empowerment strategy. It's not dirty. It's not somebody else's job. To me, it is integral in your collaboration to improve the child and family services sectors in your state and community." Levine finds truth in the well-known adage, "Smart politicians know when there's a parade and get in front of it." He told participants that if they could form parades in their neighborhoods, communities, and states that included service professionals, civic organizations, and business leaders who were all committed to improving the quality of care for children and families, "smart politicians will know that's a banner they can carry."

SECTION THREE: SPOTLIGHT ON THE PRACTICE

The symposium agenda included a number of activities that allowed practitioners to share with one another about their successful programs, challenging experiences in the field, and new knowledge or ideas gained at the symposium. Through panel presentations, collaborative meetings of those with similar professional roles or those from the same state, concurrent sessions on such issues as cultural diversity or educating substance-exposed children, and roundtable discussions, symposium participants worked together to shape the symposium to meet their needs. They discussed transitions, school readiness, advice for collaborators, and plans for the future.

TRANSITIONS

As attendees of this second symposium on preschool-to-school transitions, participants had developed quite clear definitions of what "transition" means to them in their professional activities. For instance, according to David R. Denton, director of health and human services for the Southern Regional Education Board, transitions are about providing services for children and adults "over the lifespan that are consistent with what we know about human development, as opposed to saying you can look at life in clearly defined segments that are all going to start or end at a particular point." Ann Levy, of the Southern Early Childhood Association, added that transitions "used to be something educators thought about at the end of the year. [They'd say,] 'Oh, our kids are going on to kindergarten, let's go visit the school.'" What's being talked about now, she added, "is a planned, constant, year-round emphasis on transitions."

READINESS

"By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." This is the nation's first education goal, and it has brought much-needed attention to early childhood development. But "the language of the national goal is problematic," said Denton. "Children learn from the time they are born; they don't start learning when they enter school. And the way [the national goal] is worded, it tends to put the onus on the child . . . When you talk about children's readiness for school, you have to talk about schools being ready for children." Pennie Turner, an elementary school teacher, illustrated the need for school readiness with this anecdote: "I heard a speaker say that he had heard some teachers talk about 'those awful kids parents send us.' He pointed out to them, 'Those parents are sending us the best kids they have, and they're not going to send us any others.'"

When you talk about children's readiness for school, you have to talk about schools being ready for children.

Achieving school readiness is a complex task because home environments and preschool experiences and opportunities vary widely. That is why school readiness, Denton said, must encompasses such issues as health, nutrition, housing, the economy, social welfare, parenting skills, and prenatal care. Collaboration is obviously necessary for achieving school readiness.

ADVICE FOR COLLABORATORS

Panel discussants offered a wealth of wisdom about transition issues and collaboration based on their experiences. Some of their advice—exemplified by information on their innovative activities—is summarized below.

School readiness must encompasses such issues as health, nutrition, housing, the economy, social welfare, parenting skills, and prenatal care.

Focus on Children's Needs

Pennie Turner said that when she arrived at Dacusville Elementary School in Easley, South Carolina, it was "a very ordinary school. We were driven by the basal, we were driven by the state testing program, and our teachers were burned out." Then Dacusville changed its focus. "We re-focused on being driven by what was good for our children," Turner said. "We stopped looking at the children as 'those trailer kids,' or 'those kids who can't do because of where they came from,' and started looking at ourselves and our program." The school, which serves a poor rural community, adopted a whole language approach, planned learning activities across grade levels, improved its professional development program, and educated parents about the new curriculum and pedagogy. Said Turner, who is director of the school's Successfully Teaching At-Risk Students (STARS) program: "Our school is dramatically different because we decided not to focus on the problems that the children had, but focused on what we could change."

Patty Jones, education director of the SHARE/Greenville-Pickens Head Start program in South Carolina, and Lindsey Cole, principal of Cone Elementary School, work together to share resources and records for the children they will both serve at different times. Collaboration, Jones said, is about "constantly pooling services to provide what's best for children. . . . To make a project like this work, people have to be open to it. You have to really want to do it. Children have to [come] first, and when things get hairy, and they do, and you feel like throwing up your hands, you just have to ask: 'Hey, what is this all about?'" and remember that it is about children's needs.

Work with Parents to Improve Transitions

Judith L. Lann, principal of Northside Primary School in Natchez, Mississippi, recognized the needs of the children in her community and the importance of working with parents. "These children have not been anywhere but at home or with that family until they come to school," Lann said, "and what they bring with them is a direct result of their environment, good or bad. We feel that by working with parents, we can help them help us." Lann has helped improve the preschool-to-school transition by housing preschool classrooms at the district's two public elementary schools; the preschool pupils are involved in schoolwide activities and teachers are included in staff development. Much-needed parent education programs were developed, and parents

are encouraged to become involved in the transition program at their child's school.

Change Negative Attitudes About Working with Others

Barriers to collaboration, said Joy Blount of Georgia's Department of Education, are often in our own minds or hearts. "It has a lot to do with our belief systems." For example, educators have been working in isolation for so long that they find it hard to share their struggles with others. "We have this 'Savior' complex. We think that we have to do it all. Well, we can't do it all and we know we can't. We have years and years of evidence that shows we're not doing it all when we're trying to do it alone."

Ask Tough Questions and Change Policies

To put services to better use and to target and cut duplication of effort, Georgia's state preschool program requires the development of coordinating councils which oversee the use of time, talent, and dollars. At a minimum, these councils must have representation from the school, public health department, department of family and children services, and parents of children being served. At council meetings, said Joy Blount, "we can look at the public health department [representative] and say, 'What are your hours?' And they'll say, 'nine to four.' And we'll say, 'Our preschool program is here to serve our children who come from poor families. If these are poor, working families, how can they ever make it to the health department if you're only open from nine to four? Are you willing to be open from nine to nine? Are you willing to be open on Saturday? Are you willing to go to the school and do immunizations?' Sometimes the answer is 'yes,' but other times people say, 'No, we're not allowed to do that.' But because the Department of Education is working with the Department of Human Resources, we're able to call the people who are in charge of public health and say, 'Here are some of the answers we're getting. What do you think we ought to do?'" Policy changes are clearly possible when decision makers collaborate.

Know What to Do to Overcome Stumbling Blocks

Bebe Fearnside has a lot of experience with collaboration. As the preschool supervisor for the Preschool Liaison Program in Alachua County, Florida, she has been involved with a 20-year effort to improve service delivery and school transitions for children. This program brings together representatives from private preschools, Title XX child-care centers, Head Start, the school board, the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, mental health agencies, the day-care licensing agency, medical and dental services, exceptional student programs, vocational programs, universities, parents, principals, and community organizations. Serving about 700 children in public preschool programs and 1,500 children in contracted slots in

public and private preschools, the program is administered with "wrap-around funding" from all involved organizations. Included with the program is the county's Family Services Center which offers a "one-stop shopping" approach to providing early childhood and adult education, parent training, college and job placement opportunities, family counseling, and health services. Based on her extensive experience, Fearnside offered her advice for overcoming the "stumbling blocks" to effective collaboration:

- Recognize success early on. "Everybody needs to be told that they do something best," Fearnside said. "Everybody needs to feel they're needed."

- Ask for help. Let service providers know they will not be put out of business or have their programs cut when everyone starts to help each other. There are a lot of needs to be met and plenty of work for everyone who wants to get involved.

- Seek the necessary support. "The biggest building block, if you will, is having a system that supports you," Fearnside said. "Having a school board that supports you, having a community that supports you. I think if you believe in what you're doing with young children, you can convince anyone that it's the right thing to do."

- Seek input to create the vision. Ask the question, "Where do we, as a community, want to be two years from now, five years from now, ten years from now?"

- Set priorities. Take your list of goals and ask collaborators to pick the three or four that are most critical. Focus effort on these priorities; success will empower and energize the group to tackle other goals.

- Be creative. Use funds to meet your goals but avoid letting the funding drive your programs. Look for other kinds of resources, such as volunteers and in-kind contributions.

- Identify personnel strengths. Pool and survey your resources of time and talent and match people's strengths to the various tasks at hand.

- Take risks to do things differently. For example, when Fearnside and colleagues were looking for ways to extend their resources to more than the 500 children in their program, they had to take a few risks to change the rules. They began by allowing child-care providers to purchase supplies through the

If you believe in what you're doing with young children, you can convince anyone that it's the right thing to do.

school district's fiscal distribution center and use the film library. Fearnside also suggests, if "we want to provide medical services to these children, let's become a Medicaid provider. You talk about taking a risk? That's taking a risk."

- Avoid the barriers in your own way of thinking. Fearnside says these barriers are "thinking the way you always thought, looking for an excuse not to do something, finding a rule that you say you just can't possibly break, complaining about never having enough money (and that's the reason you don't do the job), and saying families don't care. That's the major cop-out."

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Feedback from participants about the symposium revealed that many had been energized to try new ideas, use new contacts, and continue learning from each other in the future:

Mandy Walters, who represented the Choctaw High/Scope Early Childhood Education Program in Philadelphia, Mississippi, said she was fortunate to get to know a state official in one of her small-group sessions. "We're funded by the federal government," she said, "and we feel we have something good we'd like to share with everyone else." She hopes that the state and the Choctaw program can work together to disseminate successful practices to other parts of Mississippi.

Principal Linda Story and teacher Linda Ryall, representing the Just 4 & 5 Developmental Laboratory in Mobile, Alabama, said they had never before realized how many services can be duplicated without collaboration. Story said they planned to go home and contact Head Start, Chapter 1, and day-care workers "and try to accomplish more for the children, instead of each of us doing our own thing." Said Ryall: "We know that our budget is limited right now and it's going to continue to be. We have to find ways to stretch that money. We heard a lot of good ideas here."

Nancy Wiffenbach, an elementary school teacher, and Jane Mulligan, a preschool director, represented the Preschool Kindergarten Partnership in St. Petersburg, Florida. They said they learned a lot about pooling funds and about each other. "I never really got to work with Jane, and I have her students in my classroom," Wiffenbach said. "Now we can share information."

Mandy Smith, a teacher at West Oxford Elementary School in North Carolina, said she learned some things from the STARS program at

Dacusville Elementary School in Easley, South Carolina. "They actually started their program after coming to see us," Smith said, "but now I feel like I'm learning from them, because they've taken what we've done and adapted it."

Linda Lentin, lead teacher at South Pointe Elementary School in Dade County, Florida, said she works at a school "where, if we didn't send things home in three languages, it would be useless." After seeing the "Color Me Ready" video series presented at the symposium by Janice Gordon, a principal in Okaloosa County, Florida, Lentin plans to work with Gordon to get the videotapes translated into Spanish, Haitian, and Creole. The videotapes encourage family involvement in education.

As for the results of the symposium, Turner probably put it best when she said, "Too many of us are reinventing the wheel that's already rolling right down the road somewhere else." By attending a forum that spotlights successes, participants can realize that they are not alone in the struggle to change the way children and families are served and educated, and they can learn from each other and adapt ideas for their communities. Professionals involved with children and families, Lentin concluded, "have to begin to have conversations with each other, and they have to realize that the bottom line is the kids. It's all the same kids we're treating, and we're coming at them from different directions. It's senseless. The only way we're going to do it right for these kids, and the only way this country is going to have a future, is if we quit protecting our turf and start really talking to each other. That's the main theme I see at this symposium."

By attending a forum that spotlights successes, participants can realize that they are not alone in the struggle to change the way children and families are served and educated, and they can learn from each other and adapt ideas for their communities.

CONCLUSION

By the end of the Second Annual Early Childhood Symposium on Pre-School-to-School Transition, it was clear that several main themes had emerged. As a region, the Southeast faces many challenges which have a direct impact on young children and the transitions they will experience: high poverty; growth that far outpaces services to deal with it; struggling economies; more and more working mothers; too many births to poorly educated teenage mothers; and disproportionate amounts of money spent on prisons and other reactionary measures instead of on children and education.

Interagency collaboration is the only way to address the difficult issues faced by schools and families with young children, yet present efforts are often disjointed or even at cross-purposes even though they are supposed to be serving the same clients. A coordinated and collaborative approach to meeting the needs of schools and families will maximize resources and enhance the delivery of essential services. Such an approach requires a great deal of planning, open-mindedness, and willingness to work for change even if it means upsetting the comfortable (however inadequate) status quo.

There are many good transition programs in the region—educators and other service providers have discovered or developed successful strategies to deal with the challenges being faced by their colleagues all over the Southeast. The next step is to provide opportunities for sharing of information about successful programs and support efforts by others to adopt, adapt, or replicate them. SERVEing Young Children and the other co-sponsors of the conference will continue to play a leading role in sponsoring and supporting such efforts in the Southeast.

Appendices

Appendix A: Symposium Agenda

Appendix B: Symposium Sponsors

Appendix C: Promising Programs and Contacts

Appendix D: Suggested Readings on Transition

Appendix E: Conference Participants

Appendix A: SYMPOSIUM AGENDA

SERVE Announces a COLLABORATION EVENT . . .

Spotlight on *Success*

2ND ANNUAL EARLY CHILDHOOD SYMPOSIUM ON PRESCHOOL-TO-SCHOOL TRANSITION

HOLIDAY INN BUCKHEAD
3340 Peachtree Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30026
404-231-1234

OCTOBER 1-2, 1992

Sponsored by SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE)
Southern Association on Children Under Six (SACUS)
Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL),
State Departments of Education for
Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina

- This is an invitational symposium for 100 innovators in early childhood education. School leadership teams, state and district teams, private and public child-care providers, K-3 classroom teachers, community members, Head Start directors, Department of Education representatives, university professors, health and human services personnel, and child advocates are invited to attend, network, and share their experiences.
- The FOCUS will be on COLLABORATION. The sponsors will provide a variety of experiences focused on collaboration and teaming. Participants will work together to develop systems and procedures to ensure continuity for children and families. Teams from states, districts or schools are especially encouraged to attend.
- The SPOTLIGHT will be on SUCCESS! Those programs recognized in the SERVEing Young Children Sharing Success Program will be featured in panels, showcases, and roundtable presentations. Their successes will be celebrated at the Celebration Banquet on Thursday evening. Participants will learn how they can adopt or adapt these successful programs. Together we will celebrate our successes in providing for young children and their families.

AGENDA

Thursday, October 1, 1992

8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast Networking
9:00 a.m.	General Session Welcome by Sponsoring Agencies
10:00 a.m.	Break
10:15 a.m.	Feature Panel Presentations on Transition Models
11:30 a.m.	Collaboration Meetings (by State)
12:30 p.m.	[*Lunch on your own*]
1:30 p.m.	Feature Presentation "A Demographic Forecast for the Southeast" Harold Hodgkinson's summary of 1990 census information
2:00 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions on Critical Issues • "Interagency Collaboration" - Martin J. Blank, Institute for Educational Leadership • Appreciating Cultural Differences - Indians of the Southeast • Substance-Exposed Children
3:00 p.m.	Collaboration Meetings (by Role)
4:00 p.m.	General Session "How to Become a Program Adopter"
6:00 p.m.	Cash Bar
7:00 p.m.	Celebration Banquet

Friday, October 2, 1992

	[*Breakfast on your own*]
8:30 a.m.	Showcases of Promising Programs in Transition
9:00 a.m.	Roundtable Presentations
11:00 a.m.	Break and Hotel Checkout
11:30 a.m.	Collaboration Meetings (Mixed Groups)
12:30 p.m.	Luncheon and Speaker - Jack Levine, Florida Center for Children and Youth "Collaborating to Build Political Muscle for Young Children"
2:30 p.m.	Departure

Appendix B
SYMPOSIUM SPONSORS

SouthEastern Regional
Vision for Education (SERVE)
345 South Magnolia Drive
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Tallahassee, FL 32301-2950

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Little Rock, AK 72215-5403

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50 North Ripley Street
Montgomery, AL 36130-3901

Florida Department of Education
Florida Education Center
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

Georgia Department of Education
Twin Towers East
Atlanta, GA 30334-5080

Mississippi Department of Education
P. O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205

North Carolina
Department of Public Instruction
301 North Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825

South Carolina Department of Education
Rutledge Building
1429 Senate Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Alabama Education Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 4177
Montgomery, AL 36195

Follow Through Project
University of Georgia
230 Fairfax Hall
Athens, GA 30602

Florida Association of School Administrators
206 B South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Mississippi Association on Children
Under Six (MACUS)
P. O. Box 9824
Jackson, MS 39286-0824

ORBIS Associates
Indian Education Technical Assistance Center
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Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005

Appendix C

PROMISING PROGRAMS AND CONTACTS

SHARING SUCCESS RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

DISTRICT-LEVEL MODELS

PROGRAM NAME	CONTACT NAME	MAILING ADDRESS	PHONE
Preschool Kindergarten Partnership	Barbara Knowles Executive Director	Pinellas County License Board for Children's Centers and Family Day Care Homes 4140 - 49th Street North St. Petersburg, FL 33709	813-521-1853
Pre-Kindergarten in the Aberdeen School District	Sally Bourland Federal Program Coordinator	Aberdeen School District P. O. Drawer 607 Aberdeen, MS 39730	601-369-6427
Head Start-Public School Transition Project	Janice N. England Early Childhood Program Specialist	Birmingham Public Schools P. O. Box 10007 Birmingham, AL 35202	205-583-4692
Full Day Comprehensive Child Development Program for Four-Year-Old Children	Lindsey D. Cole Principal or Patty Jones Education Director	Cone Elementary School 500 Gridley Street Greenville, SC 29609 SHARE-Greenville/Pickens Head Start Program 2404 Augusta Street Greenville, SC 29605	803-241-3507 803-235-5370
Pre-Kindergarten Early Intervention Program	Sarah Sprinkel Early Childhood Program Specialist	Orange County Public Schools 434 North Tampa Avenue Orlando, FL 32805	407-849-3330
Choctaw/High Scope Early Childhood Education Program	Mandy Walters Curriculum Coordinator	Choctaw Dept. of Education P. O. Box 6010 Philadelphia, MS 39350	601-656-5251
Natchez Public Schools Preschool	Judy Lann Principal	Northside Primary 1445 George F. West Boulevard Natchez, MS 39120	601-445-2885

SHARING SUCCESS RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

SCHOOL-BASED MODELS

PROGRAM NAME	CONTACT NAME	MAILING ADDRESS	PHONE
West Oxford Elementary	Barbara Harris Principal	West Oxford Elementary School 412 Ivey Day Road Oxford, NC 27565	919-693-9161
South Pointe Elementary School	Patricia Parham Principal	South Pointe Elementary School 1050 Fourth Street Miami Beach, FL 33139	305-531-5437
Successfully Teaching At-Risk Students (STARS)	Pennie Turner Director	Dacusville Elementary School 2671 Earle Bridge Road Easley, SC 29640	803-859-7429

COMPREHENSIVE PRESCHOOL MODELS

PROGRAM NAME	CONTACT NAME	MAILING ADDRESS	PHONE
Flagler County Schools Daycare	Peter Jagocki Coordinator	Flagler County Schools Daycare P. O. Box 755 Bunnell, FL 32110	904-437-8302
Just 4 & 5 Developmental Laboratory	Linda Story Principal	Just 4 & 5 Developmental Lab. 2263 St. Stephens Road Mobile, AL 36617	205-478-7001
Stecoah Preschool Program	Tonia Walsh Home School Coordinator	Stecoah Elementary School Rt. 2, Box 114 Robbinsville, NC 28771	704-479-8420
Preschool Liaison Program	Bebe Fearnside Preschool Supervisor	Preschool Liaison Program 620 East University Avenue Gainesville, FL 32601	904-336-3615
Even Start Family Literacy Project	Janice England	Birmingham Public Schools P. O. Box 10007 Birmingham, AL 35202	205-583-4692

SHARING SUCCESS RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

PARENT INVOLVEMENT MODELS

PROGRAM NAME	CONTACT NAME	MAILING ADDRESS	PHONE
Partners in Early Childhood Education (P.I.E.C.E.)	Ruth Rollins Searcy Director	Canton Elementary School South Hargon Street Canton, MS 39046	601-859-7704
Helping Our Parents Through Education (HOPE)	Margaret Morton Guidance Counselor	Indian Valley Elementary School 1099 Oldfield Road Sylacauga, AL 35150	205-249-0397
Good Start	Mary McRae Director	Good Start Lowndes County Schools P. O. Box 1227 Valdosta, GA 31603-1227	912-245-2250
Kids And Parents at School (KAPS)	Margaret Dukes Lead Teacher	DAFFODIL 3015 State Street Waycross, GA 31501	912-287-2311

Appendix D
SUGGESTED READINGS ON TRANSITION

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